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Advice to the Electors of SCOTLAND, About Chos-
ing Members for next Parliament.

IT IS not unknown to you, Gentlemen, that the principal Argument made use of to bring our Nation into the Union, was the Prospect of enlarging our Trade; for want of which the Country was reduc'd to a deplorable Condition.

'Tis equally known to you that our Fishery, (the Noblest in the known World) is capable of the highest Improvement, and that our Neighbours, the Dutch, have gain'd more by their fishing in our Seas than by any other part of their Trade.

Upon this Consideration, those who intended the Service of their Country, (and indeed of the whole Island) by the Union, had their Eye principally fix'd on that Branch of our Trade: And, in order to promote it, did, after some Struggle with our own Courtiers, obtain an Amendment to the 8th Article of the Union, *That for Encouragement of the Herring Fishing there sh. uld be allow'd, and paid to the Subjects, Inhabitants of Great-Britain, (during the present Allowances for other Fish) 10 shillings and 5 Pence Sterling for every Barrel of White Herrings which should be exported from Scotland.*

The Reason why this was so particularly insisted upon, was, that it might be plain, and not liable to any Chicane or Cavil afterwards; because having been possess'd of the Herring-Fishing so long, there was no reason to submit that matter to any Doubt or misrepresentation for time to come, by which we might be depriv'd of the Benefit of a Trade that was actually in our Hands; therefore the Argument that some make use of, that there can be no Drawback where there is no Duty paid, is at an End: This being intended as an Encouragement, and particularly express'd so in the said 8th Article of the Union.

You cannot be ignorant how much this Encouragement was valu'd and magnify'd, and how frequently it was made use of to stop the Mouths of those who oppos'd the Union.

You are not such Strangers to the Affairs of your Country, as not to know that upon the Faith and Credit of this Act, (when ratify'd by the Legislature of both Nations) several of our Merchants and Traders, cur'd, and exported Herrings, and other Fish in the Terms of the Act, and accordingly made their Demands of the Eases, Premiums and Drawbacks, appointed by the said Act, from the Officers of her Majesty's Customs in *Scotland*, who not only refus'd to pay them, but even to grant Debentures for them.

Upon this our Merchants apply'd to the Executive Power, but without any Redress.

The next step they took, was to apply themselves to the Parliament of *Great-Britain*, where they lodg'd their Case, and Petition'd for Remedy, according to the 8th Article of Union.

We suppose it needless to inform you how the Matter was, delay'd there, and which of our own Members acted in that Matter as became them towards their own Country, and which of them acted otherwise; for we doubt not but you have made a sufficient Inquiry into that Matter, in order to govern you in your Choice at next Election.

Nor do we doubt but you have heard how our Country was treated in that Matter, by some Courtiers, and others of *South Britain*, when the Merchants Petition

was mov'd to be heard the last Day of the Session; for we can make no question but such of our Members as bravely express'd their Resentments of it, have fully inform'd you of the whole Transactions in this Matter.

We shall not insist upon the nature of the Union Act, as being more transcendent than a common Act of Parliament; and therefore not to be interpreted or alter'd by a less Authority than that of the Sovereignties of both Nations, in the same independent State as they made it, nor would we create any Jealousies in you of the Members of *South-Britain* in general: For we have reason to think, that had the Matter come to a Question in the United Parliament, we should have carried our Point.

Nor shall we insist upon the Damage our Merchants sustain'd by the stop put to the importation of their Goods into *England*, contrary to the first and 4th Articles of the Union, &c. For tho' the Prohibition was taken off by the Parliament of *Great-Britain*, yet there was no Censure inflicted on those who made such an early Breach upon the Union, nor any Compensation given to our Merchants for their loss of Market, and the spoiling and Leakage of their Goods.

But we think it incumbent upon you to choose none for Members, but such as will solemnly engage to agree to no Infraction upon any Article of the Treaty, without the Express Consent of their Constituents, and likewise to endeavour a Red Parliamentary way of such Infractions as have been already made, and particularly this denial of the Drawbacks. Eases and Premiums made to our Merchants, expressly contrary to the 8th Article of Union above-mention'd.

To set this Matter in a clear Light, we must inform you of the Pretences made use of by those who oppos'd our Merchants. And 1. That the Salt wherewith we cur'd our Fish, was in *Scotland* before the 1st of *May*; add therefore we are not to have the Drawback.

To this we answer'd, 1. That the Union Act makes no such Exception; and since it was ratify'd by both Parliaments, there is no Power on Earth that can now justly alter it. 2. That we have Presidents from their own Laws against this Exception, after an Act is pass'd, viz. The 5th and 6th of *William* and *Mary* lays 3 pence per Gallon on Foreign Salt, and rewards the Exporters of certain Fish therein mention'd. The 8th of *William III.* lays an additional Duty of 2 Pence per Gallon upon Foreign Salt, and grants further Allowance to the Exporters of Fish. The 9th of *William III.* raises the Duty on Foreign Salt to 7 Pence per Gallon, and gives yet further allowance for Fish exported; and all those additional Rewards and Drawbacks are constantly made good to the Exporters in *England*, without being ask'd the Question whether such Fish had been cur'd with Salt that had paid the additional Duty for which those additional Drawbacks are allow'd, until an Act made in *England* after the Treaty was concluded, and before the Union commenc'd, intitul'd, *An Act for the Ease of her Majesty's Subjects, in relation to the Duties upon Salt, and for making the like Allowances upon the Exportation of White Herring, as are to be upon the Exportation of the like from Scotland*, which we must observe by the way, ratifies the Drawbacks allow'd us by the Union.

Their second Objection is, That should a Drawback be allow'd on Fish cur'd with Salt, which has not paid the high Duty, People would be encourag'd to run Salt, to save the Excise.

To this we answer'd, That the Objection is trifling; for those that do so, are liable

ble to the Law, and such as are inclin'd to the like Practices, are more likely to run Brandy, which pays 20^l. Sterling per Hoghead.

Their third Objection is, That the granting us, (whose Salt has paid no Duty) those Allowances, Eases, Premiums, and Drawbacks on Fish, would give us such an Advantage over them, as might obstruct their Fishery, and cause an Inequality, which was never intended by the Union.

To this we answer'd, 1. That they were mistaken, for our Salt before the Union paid near 14 Pence per Bushel. 2. That by the 5th of Queen Anne, above-mention'd, The English were allow'd after the 1st of May last, the same Allowances which are to be made upon the Exportation of White Herrings from Scotland, which puts the Inequality upon us, because we are oblig'd to cure our Herrings with Foreign Salt only, which pays a far greater Duty than the Home Salt, with which the English cure their Herrings. 3. That our Barrels of Herring contains 32 Galleons, and the English Cask of Pilchards contains 50; and since a Herring requires as much Salt as a Pilchard, they had no reason to grudge us 10 Shillings and 5 Pence on the former, when they themselves were allow'd 40 Shillings upon the latter.

We must likewise acquaint you, that for every Barrel of White Herring exported from England since the Union, the Encouragement has been regularly paid to the English Exporters, but in Scotland we have told you already it has been denied, and that our Applications here for a Redress have hitherto been ineffectual; besides, you must needs be satisfied by your own Reason, that our Merchants in Scotland were not to delay the Fishing by waiting for Salt from Abroad to pay the great Duty, for by this means the Fishing Season, which begins in May, must have been lost; and you cannot imagine how much Damage we have sustain'd in this Years Fishing already, by this unreasonable Denial; whereas, had the Encouragements been punctually paid, the Fishing might have gone on with Success.

There are some who likewise pretend that the Payment of 10 s. and 5 d. a Barrel would waste the Duty of Salt, and diminish Her Majesty's Customs; and, they are pleas'd to say, That this Allowance would raise 50000^l Sterling per Annum; but allowing this to be true (though there is nothing in it) they had time enough to foresee this while the Treaty of Union was in Debate, which was the only proper time to make the Objection; but those Men do not consider that by a punctual Payment of these Encouragements, the Herring Fishing must have increased to at least 100000 Barrels per Annum; which, with the increase of Seamen and the Customs, which the Returns of those 100000 Barrels of Herrings would bring to Her Majesty, wou'd have sufficiently indemnified the Government from all their pretended Losses.

In order to your better understanding this, we desire you would take notice, that the Premiums and Encouragements for the Fishery, as now settled by the Union, are upon a very different Foundation from that which is commonly call'd Drawbacks; for the end of these Encouragements is to raise the Fishing, and therefore do much exceed the Duty of Salt consumed in curing of Fish, for instance, a Punchion of Pilchards requires but two Bushels of Salt at most; which, if Foreign, pays 14 s. Custom and Excise, yet the Exporter has 40 s. per Punchion, under the Name of Drawbacks.

In like manner a Last of Red-Herring may be cur'd with 8 Bushels of Home Salt.

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which pays only 26 s. 8 d. Excise, yet the Exporter has 4 l. per Last by the Name of Drawback; which is as disproportionable to the Duty paid for Salt consum'd as that of 6 s. for Fishes cur'd with Salt, imported into Scotland before the 1st of May, and paying the Scots Duty. Now if the Laws of England be sufficient to secure the English Exporters in these large Allowances, we leave to judge with what Reason the like Allowance can be denied to the Scots Exporters; especially, since by the 18th Article of Union, the Laws concerning the Regulation of Trade, Customs, and such Excises to which Scotland is by virtue of this Treaty to be liable, are to be the same in Scotland, after the Union, as in England.

Besides, 'tis plain, that the refusing this Encouragement to the Exporters from Scotland, can be of no Advantage to the Revenue, for if that Salt be not employ'd in curing of Fish, 'twill be us'd in England instead of that which would have paid Her Majesty the high Duty; and, as the Refusal of it is expressly contrary to the Treaty of Union, 'twill ruin Multitudes of Families, and oblige our poor Fishermen and Seamen, who had a comfortable Subsistence from this Trade, to seek their Livelihood in Foreign Countries; which will weaken the Nation, sink the Revenue, by the Loss of the Customs on the Returns, utterly disappoint the Merchant who expected an Enlargement of Trade by the Union, affect all the People in the Country from the highest to the lowest, and unavoidably increase those Discontents which are too great already.

'Tis plain that the Fishermen must be entirely ruin'd by the Refusal of this Encouragement, for they cannot afford to give the Merchant his Price for the Salt, which he may have elsewhere, and without Salt they cannot carry on the Fishing Trade.

'Tis therefore incumbent upon you, Gentlemen, and especially such as are Electors for the Royal Burroughs, to give positive Instructions, to your Members to insist on an immediate Redress, and on an effectual Security that no such Infraction may be made on the Treaty in time to come, otherwise all the valuable Privileges, which are reserv'd to the Royal Burroughs by the Union and all the rest of the Articles, may in like manner be made void.

We hope the Arguments us'd by some that the Encouragement of our Fishery will disoblige the Dutch, will have no influence with you. We demand nothing but our Right to improve what God and Nature has given us; and 'tis agreeable to Reason, as well as Law, that he who makes use of his own Right does Injury to no Man.

We hope you will not be discourag'd by the little Regard which your Members on other Occasions have shew'd to your Instructions, though 'twas your Right they shou'd; for you are now embodied with a People who have that Privilege interwoven with their Constitution, and are so sensible, that if your Liberties be once suppress'd, theirs cannot be long liv'd, to deny you their Concurrence, if your own Members insist upon it, with that Courage, and Honesty, for which Scots men have been formerly remarkable.

Upon the whole, 'tis your indispensable Duty to choose as many Men who understand Trade and have an Interest in it, as you can, for they are most like to promote it, and least liable to Temptations to be brought off from the Interest of their Country, by Places or Pensions.

For our Barons, who have always justly been reckon'd our best State, and are the Proprietors of most of the Country, we doubt not but they will choose Men of spirit and sense, who understand the Interest and Honour of the Nation, and will neither be hector'd nor brib'd out of it.

For our State of Lords, many of whom are the Heads of the greatest and ancientest Families in Europe, we have Reason to hope that they will take care to support what Interest and Honour is left them, by choosing Men of fortune and courage, who are the most like to insist upon a Redress of present Grievances, and to fall upon effectual Measures to prevent others for time to come.

F I N I S.